Increase in STD/ISD rates

970. SHRI RAJU PARMAR:
SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether STD/ISD rates for cell and WLL service providers have been increased drastically by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India;

(b) if so, what are the rates of STD/ISD from cell, cell to WLL and cell to landline and vice versa; and

(c) the likely revenue to be earned on account of this increase?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) No, Sir. *Vide* its 24th Amendment to Telecommunication Tariff Order, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has forborne on the prescription of STD tariffs, subject to a ceiling of Rs. 8.40 per minute. TRAI has also forborne completely on the prescription of ISD tariffs.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Withdrawal of 'Rural' status

971. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Telecom Department has withdrawn 'Rural' status for many suburban pockets solely on the basis of census figures of 2001;

(b) whether these pockets/villages still retain the rural characteristics and are still classified as 'Rural' in State revenue records; and

(c) what other criteria were considered for upgradation of 'Rural' areas apart from demographic density as recorded by 2001 census?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY